1:Smith & Dale M, G-5 (1902-1914)1920
FQ6 Ila FQ6

PREFACE

As we hope that this work may be taken as a serious contribution to African ethnography, it is perhaps best that we should present our credentials and describe briefly our methods of research and the principles that have guided us.

When we entered the Ila country—the one in 1902 and the other at the end of 1904—neither was a stranger to African life. Mr. Smith had served his Church for four years in South Africa and knew the Suto and (to some extent) the Xosa languages. Mr. Dale, after serving in the Matabele and Bechuanaland campaigns and the Boer War, was for three years (1902–4) Assistant Native Commissioner of the Wankie district in Southern Rhodesia, knew the Tebele language, and had also travelled among the Tonga people on the north bank of the Zambesi.

Finding ourselves among a people that were almost unknown to the outside world, we threw ourselves into a study of their language and customs, our motive being, not the production of a book of this kind, but simply that we might prosecute our callings as missionary and magistrate to the best advantage. For whether one is to teach or govern, one's first duty is to understand the people. In the course of years we found our stock of information accumulating, and in 1909 we determined to collaborate in a book that should record the results of our research. From that time we continued our investigations deliberately with that end in view. From first to last, this book is, then, the result of some thirteen years' first-hand study.

The completion and publication of the book have been delayed by the War. When news of its outbreak reached us, Mr. Dale immediately left the farm which he had been

173 and was buried in the sacred grove, Isaka-chazi. There was great lamentation. People said: 'Let us all die. Leza wills that our *mushobo* (tribe) shall never be strong on earth. The kingdom has perished with Shilumweemwe for there is no one to take his place. Let us starve to death rather than kill each other!' So they burnt their grain and threw pots and mortars and grinding stones into the river. They mourned without feasting. One old man, moved with pity for his little grandson, hid some food and others followed his example.

"And so the nation as a nation came to an end. It split into fragments as we see it to-day. Men to whom the king had entrusted his cattle to herd now claimed them as their own, built villages apart and set up to be chieflings of separate communes. Peace came to an end. Inter-communal visitings ceased. Cattle-raiding became the normal thing. One commune made war upon another. Whole sections of the nation moved off and became distrinct tribes, as did Batonga and Balenje, and in course of time learnt to speak different dialects. And so things are what they are to-day in the land where once flourished a great kingdom."

114 173 In this story as related by Syapela Price no mention is made of the Chiefs whose story is told in the *Ila-Speaking Peoples*—of Shimunenga, Munyama, Bulongo—nor of others who are still reverenced as divinities. Presumably they came on the scene subsequent to the decline and fall of the kingdom.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

63 177 Of the changes that have taken place in the Ila country none is of greater interest and more promising for the future than the substitution of "indirect" for "direct" rule, i.e. the recognition of Native Authorities as an integral element of administration. In Northern Rhodesia the transformation began in 1930 when the old Native courts were re-established and given certain powers. In 1936 Native Treasuries and Appeal

[P. 7(B)]

3:Smith M-5 (1902, 1947) 1949
FQ6 IIa FQ6

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SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE BA-ILA

●114 No one is more aware than I of the deficiences of the *Ila-speaking Peoples*. I always hoped that other investigators would fill the gaps that Dale and I left, particularly in regard to social organization; but up to the present this has not been done. The defects are all the more glaring in view of the full analysis of some other tribes that has been provided by recent researchers: Evans-Pritchard for the Nuer, Fortes for the Tallensi, Forde for the Yako. The Baila are included in the seven-year research plan of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute and no doubt as a result of it we shall learn much more about them. Meanwhile I took advantage of my visit to ask some questions. The time at my disposal was insufficient to push inquiries to a satisfactory conclusion; but I record a few notes in the hope that they may be useful to other workers.

1. *The Mushobo*

619 If the Baila are asked what constitutes a *mushobo* they reply that it is made up of persons who (a) speak a common language, albeit with some dialectal variation; (b) have the same colour of skin; (c) practise the same customs; and (d) belong to kinship groups through which they are genetically linked with the ancestors who founded the larger group of the *mushobo*. We may translate

[P. 53 (B)]

4: Jaspan E-4 (no date) 1953 FQ6 Ila FQ6

II. *THE ILA*

The main body of material concerning the Ila was gathered by Smith and Dale during the first 20 years of this century.[1] Brief additional notes based on subsequent visits to the Ila have been published since the end of the Second World War.[2] The ethnographic value of the material on the Ila is undoubted, but its contemporary sociological significance is necessarily limited in view of the great changes that have occurred in Northern Rhodesia since the beginning of the century.

ECONOMY

The following notes may be added to the remarks on the ecology of Ilaland contained in the Introductory Section (p. 20 above).

The wide plains through which the Kafue flows are among the most fertile in Northern Rhodesia. Immediately alongside the river banks there are villages inhabited by the swamp-dwelling Twa. Their gardens in the rich alluvial loam are exceptionally fertile, even in this area. The sandy forest and jungle bush bordering the banks are also used for cultivation.[3]

To the north of the Kafue plain the hills of Mbala are infested with tsetse. To the south the sand-hills and forests rise to the Batoka Plateau. At Ndongola, at the foot of the western hills, there are sulphurous springs. The Balumbwa mountain was in the past an important sanctuary.

The swamp-lands bordering the Kafue and its tributaries are mosquito-infested, and there is consequently a high incidence of malaria in the Kafue valley.[4]

STOCK-REARING

The Ila were primarily pastoralists. Their rather small indigenous cattle were improved by the introduction of larger-sized stock from the Lozi and Lake Ngami peoples, but these are said to have suffered constant deterioration from inbreeding. In 1920 the Ila owned about 70,000 head of cattle, the largest owners possessing herds of up to 600.[5] In 1947, however, the number of cattle was estimated at only 47,000, a fall of 23,000 in 27 years. This decline in cattle population has been attributed to the encroachment of tsetse north of the Kafue River.[6]

Until the organized cattle sales at the time of the Second World War, the Ila generally did not sell their cattle, but slaughtered them at funeral feasts. Smith and Dale estimated that about 2,000 oxen were killed annually in this way. There are special "funeral oxen" (*masunto*) in almost every cattle-owner's herd, and these are slaughtered at their owner's funeral feast. Cows, however, are seldom killed because of their great value as food producers in the domestic economy.

The products derived from animal husbandry are sour milk, curds and whey, and butter which is used mostly for anointing. In addition to the beef consumed at funeral feasts, goat, sheep, and poultry meat are eaten.

The Ila value their cattle highly and are famous as good herdsmen.[7] Each cattle-owner brands his beasts' ears with his individual mark (*chando*);[8] all cattle are named.

[1] Smith and Dale, 1920, 2 vols.
[2] Smith, 1949.
[3] Smith and Dale, 1920, I, pp. 3, 9.
[4] Ibid., pp. 9, 11.
[5] Ibid., pp. 127 ff.
[6] Smith, 1949, p. 1.
[7] Smith and Dale, 1920, I, pp. 127–8; Gluckman, 1941, pp. 20–1.
[8] Smith and Dale, loc. cit.